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The Pipeline

THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF NORFOLK'S EMERGING LEADER

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Workforce Development Statistics and Tips

Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success

According to the 2007 Every Promise, Every Child: Turning Failure into Action report, a large percentage of young people preparing to enter the workforce over the next two decades are significantly lacking in "soft" or applied skills, such as teamwork, decision-making, and communication, that will help them become effective employees and managers. In addition, in a Job Outlook 2008 survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE), the top characteristics looked for in new hires by 276 employer respondents were all soft skills: communication ability, a strong work ethic, initiative, interpersonal skills, and teamwork.

Source: Skills to Pay the Bills



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A Workplace of Choice

The Norfolk's Emerging Leaders' Executive Internship Program has given twenty-two undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to get their feet wet in the realm of local government. The interns view the Executive Internship as an opportunity to become devoted public servants for the City of Norfolk and its citizens. During the four weeks that the 2013 cohort of

interns have been with the city, they have learned about



the intricacies and importance of interdepartmental relations, professionalism in the workplace, and teamwork

skills from working with their departments and their fellow interns. Of the twenty-two Executive Interns, about half of them have completed their undergraduate or graduate academic programs. They are seeking full-time employment opportunities within Norfolk to begin their careers as young professionals. We are excited they chose our organization, since it is a workplace of choice.

Civic Engagement Projects

The 2013 Executive Interns, like their predecessors, are actively working on a civic engagement project. The purpose of the project is to collectively address an issue of public concern. This year, the interns are focusing on an issue that is locally and nationally relevant, environmental sustainability. To further sustain the local environment, they will construct a rain garden

at a local recreation center. The purpose of a rain garden is to improve water quality in nearby bodies of water by decreasing the amount of pollutants entering the waterways. This project also incorporates a simple, yet effective way to help with Norfolk's flooding issue. The Executive Interns have titled their project, "Regain Rain Gardens: Taking the 'Rains'

on Environmental Sustainability." In addition to its environmental importance, the rain garden will provide a design that is aesthetically pleasing. Make sure to keep an eye out for a rain garden near you!



Brown Bag Lunches

On Tuesday June 26th Executive Interns met for their very first "Brown Bag Lunch." The purpose of the brown bag lunches is to provide the interns with an opportunity to network and converse with city employees about their experiences working in local government. Over the course of their ten-week internship,

the interns will attend three different brown bag lunches, each with a different group of employees. To kick-off the series of brown bag lunches, the interns met with "Norfolk's Young Professionals," many of which were former NEL interns. The hour-long lunch was filled with insightful conversation.

Topics ranged from personal backgrounds to employment opportunities. When asked about the lunch, NEL intern Alana Smith said, "The lunch was very informative, and it was great to hear about how employees close to my age have made their careers in government."

Executive Intern Spotlight



Alana Smith

Executive Intern, Department of Recreation, Parks and Open Space

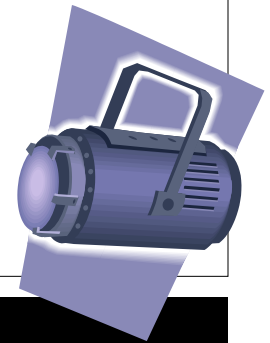
At the completion of the Executive Internship Program, Alana plans to enter the workforce in local government. As an Executive Intern during the summer of 2012, she gained an interest in urban planning while working with the Department of Planning. With a keen sense for details

and a passion for the legal field, she sees urban planning as a career focus that effectively combines and balances both. Much like law, urban planning is a way to better serve the Norfolk community through continued development and growth.

Alana's initial career goal was to become a private sector attorney, but after the completion of her municipal internship in the summer of 2012, her goal completely changed. Working with the Department of Planning opened her eyes to the importance of local government. It enlarged her understanding of community building, and as a result she gained a clearer perspective that government's role is to provide an environment that is accessible and meets the demands of its citizens. Additionally, through the municipal

internship she learned that the simplest task can make a significant difference in

the city. According to Alana, "the role of the government is to not just focus on the macro elements of government, but to remain in tune with its micro components as well." Therefore, her interest in a public sector career stems from her view that government today can assist in the overall functionality and accessibility of the city for its entire population.



Executive Intern Spotlight



Marissa Walker

Executive Intern, Department of Recreation, Parks and Open Space

After completing this internship, Marissa will return to James Madison University as a third year student. She plans to attend law school immediately

after completing her Bachelors of Arts in Justice Studies. After law school, Marissa would like to begin a career working in local government at the administrative level or as a public sector attorney.

The intricacies of governmental procedure have always sparked Marissa's interest. She first gained her inside perspective while attending Virginia Girls State in the summer of 2010, and has been focused on pursuing a career in the public sector ever since. Working for the City of Norfolk as a Municipal Intern in 2012, and then as an Executive Intern this year has further affirmed her keen interest in government. She says that "the role of government is unique in

that it essentially has no specific target audience. It works to provide services that benefit everyone, and it works to encourage equal opportunity," which she is very passionate about. Marissa believes the scope of government goes beyond policy implementation, but that it involves motivating the people in which it serves. She hopes to eventually work in government on the administrative level or as an attorney to aid in combating fundamental issues such as equality within our society.

